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## THE CASE OF JEAN CASE

(Concluded from Preceding Issue)

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### *Mrs. Grunwald:*

Jean was in high spirits when she came to the twenty-second session after the summer vacation. She wore a pin on her jacket with the inscription, "No man is good three times." When the girls laughed about it, she took it off and replaced it by the pin of her new high school. She announced with great pride that it is a good school, but she doesn't like some of the lessons and the teachers don't like her too much either. The girls discussed some of the happenings during the vacation period and then centered around a discussion of pregnancy because one of the young girls in the neighborhood had given birth to a baby. Jean took up this discussion quite seriously, saying how important it is that a girl watch herself and doesn't go around with boys whom she doesn't know too well. It would be too bad if she were to become pregnant at a time when she doesn't want a baby.

During the refreshment period, one of the girls was behaving in a silly manner, putting ice cream on the frankfurters. Jean took it off and told the girl she "should be ashamed of herself." Toward the end of the session, Jean was lying on the floor playing her favorite game, jacks. She repeated several times: "Oh, it's comfortable; oh, is it comfortable." When it was time to end the session, Jean said: "Mrs. Grunwald, did you forget that we weren't here for such a long, long time? Please let us stay longer today." The session ended at the regular time and Jean was singing nicely when she left. The elevator man volunteered to the therapist: "That girl changed!"

During the following session, Jean discussed with the other girls some of her school problems in more detail. She had difficulty with piano lessons and French. She asked the therapist to help her with her homework and said she had difficulty because she was often loud in school.

During her twenty-fourth session, Jean became quite jealous be-

cause of the attention the therapist gave one of the girls. She began by telling sexual jokes to the other girls. Jean said: "Do you know how an olive grew green for the first time? An old maid with a cherry grew green with envy." The therapist was sitting behind Jean. Jean turned around and she and another girl asked the therapist to go out. "We'll whistle for you," said Jean, "when you can come back." In a short time, Jean and the other girl rushed out of the room pacing up and down the hall, laughing loudly. They soon returned to the room and after two minutes Jean pointed to the therapist with a wide gesture of her arm and said: "Mrs. Grunwald, you are paged." She later explained that she paged as it is done at the Waldorf Astoria, where a page boy calls that way for "a very dignified person."

When there was some ice cream left over during one session, Jean suggested that we take it to two case workers who were still in the office.

It was also Jean who suggested that we take the birthday cake to the home of a member of the group who had missed the party arranged for her. Jean, another girl, and the therapist went to that girl's house. It was dark in the streets and Jean was very helpful in finding the girl's address. She urged us to use the crosstown bus because we were in a "bad section." She pointed out some billiard halls, with smoke-filled rooms, crowded with men. She said: "Here they are spending the money they should give their wives and children." When the bus came, Jean said goodbye, and added in a thoughtful way: "It would be good, Mrs. Grunwald, if you could change Harlem, but you surely never will be able to do it."

It was during the following session, her twenty-fifth, that Jean started a discussion around problems of the neighborhood. She tied these up with experiences in school. Her civics teacher is a prejudiced man, she said. She cannot stand the way he talks about juvenile delinquency in Harlem. "He always talks about Negroes, Negroes; and then I get mad. The other day he said that is was just awful that there was such a high delinquency rate in Harlem." The teacher cannot understand why there are so many gangs and why boys from Harlem turn even to killing members of another gang. Jean said that she got quite angry and said in class that she is living in the neighborhood of these boys and that she's proud of them. Some of them live under very hard conditions and often have neither father nor mother to take care of them. When they turn to killing, it's not because they are bad. They are so alone in the world and nobody loves them. "By the way," she asked her teacher, "did you know that there were also gangs in white neighborhoods?"

Jean had a dressing on her hand when she came to the twenty-

seventh session. She told the other girls that her brother had hurt her with a kitchen knife. She had to go to the hospital where they put on a dressing. She was supposed to stay at home but she ran away to come to the "club." During this meeting, Jean again sat down on the floor and played jacks, which she often did in order to withdraw from a situation that was threatening. She told the other girls that Saturday evening she went with her brother to an interpretive dance and she imitated some of the dances. The girls were laughing. Another girl took this up by saying that perhaps one might interpret many things in a dance. She went out of the room, knocked on the door, entered the room with slow and awkward movements. "This is the way my father walks," she said in a half-singing tone.

Jean rose slowly, left the room, knocked on the door and also came in with bizarre movements, saying this was the way *her* father walked. Finally both girls fell into each other's arms and fell to dancing a kind of waltz. Some of the other girls clapped with their hands, to the rhythm of the dance. They participated eagerly in the dance in which the two girls were obviously acting out their resentment against the weakness of their fathers. As they danced, the girl repeatedly said to Jean: "You should see my father. He is just like yours." The girl who had initiated the dance now imitated the way her father's "girl friend" entered the apartment, and with very slow movements spread out her legs and her arms and then finally lay down on the floor. Jean got quite excited.

When toward the end of this session the girls discussed plans for their Thanksgiving party, it was Jean who imposed on the other girls her wish that they wouldn't do anything during Thanksgiving week; that they would just stay in "our club."

At the twenty-ninth session, Jean was fumbling around with a pepsi-cola bottle and suddenly took a position behind another girl and dropped some pepsi-cola on her head. The girl shrieked loudly. Jean looked at her, laughed and said: "Now I will do this to Mrs. Grunwald and you will see that she will not scream." She slipped behind the therapist's seat and waved the pepsi-cola bottle. She laughed and said: "You see. She doesn't scream." She didn't, however, spill any pepsi cola. She proceeded to drink the contents of the bottle with great satisfaction.

During the next session, Jean was dancing with another girl. She danced either the way she saw her father behave at home or the way she saw people moving around in the movie, "Snake Pit." The girls started to invent text and melodies with which they accompanied these dances. One girl chanted: "Don't take my father from me. He's the only man I have." Jean responded: "I can take him away, he's no good." The other

girls chanted: "At least he brings home dimes and nickels, Jean. That's something." The girls continued this dance, one girl saying: "Don't take my father away," Jean saying: "Her father's no good;" another girl defending the father saying, "At least he brings home money," and Jean responding, "The father is crying."

After this dance Jean and three older girls in the group went out of the room. When I went to the washroom to pick up a broom, the four girls were sitting on garbage cans. They had their hands folded and were talking seriously. Jean said: "Mrs. Grunwald, can't you stay here with us. It is so very hard for us. I talk with the girls about my sister. Her husband makes life very miserable for her and we are all very much afraid because men are not true. They just run away and leave you with your children and then you have to take care of your children yourself." It was the first time Jean discussed her home problems in a serious and realistic way. Until now, when referring to these problems, she had told fantasy stories, but now she showed, for the first time, great concern. The other girls also talked very seriously and then all agreed that they would like to talk about these problems, but not in the presence of the other younger girls. During the following session, the four girls again left the room for long periods and had their own "club" in the washroom.

It was felt that the wish of these four girls to discuss their problems should be met by organizing for them another group where they might talk about their problems. After the thirty-ninth session, (Jean had joined the group at the fifth) the activity group was terminated. The younger and some new girls were formed into a new activity group, and the four older girls constituted an interview group. Of the thirty-four sessions during which Jean had been a member of the group, she had missed one when she was very ill.

### *Mrs. Grunwald:*

In the interview group which consisted of four girls who had previously been in the activity group, two of the girls were fourteen years of age, another, fifteen, and the fourth, sixteen years old. Altogether twenty-five sessions were held after a pause of four or five months caused by the therapist's unavoidable absence. During these twenty-five sessions one of the girls was absent once. Otherwise the attendance was perfect.

Before starting the interview group the therapist saw each girl separately and explained to her the difference between the two groups. She told them that in view of the fact that they had been interested in discussing problems and had suggested the idea, they would have an op-

portunity now to get together and talk about matters that concerned them. They were also told that there would be no more materials to work with, nor would there be any refreshments. It was suggested to each girl that she talk about everything that came to her mind quite freely and consider the conversations in the group confidential.

At the very first session the girls reflected this new image of themselves by smoking, something they had never attempted in the activity therapy group. As usual in these groups the first conversations of the girls concerned themselves with the immediate problems of the girls to which we refer as "top reality." These included matters concerning school, but soon the girls began to talk about boy friends, marriage and being mothers, about their mothers and fathers, and their wishes concerning husbands and children. The discussions were sometimes followed by some activity or play, which we consider as part of resistance and which was dealt with as such.

In order to avoid some of the conversations at the early part of the treatment sessions some of the girls would occasionally bring in knitting or play jacks for short periods. On rare occasions the girls would sing together. As already stated, this acting out we consider as being manifestations of resistance to the catharsis and communication. However, an interesting reaction was observed in the fact that at each session they would pick up some discussion of the preceding session, a fact that indicated that they had thought or cogitated about the questions and discussions in the group.

Jean had continued making progress and frequently had mentioned that she was doing well at school. Her general progress as well seemed to be continuing. Soon she began to talk about being married, which would prevent her from either working or going to school. She saw marriage as an escape from reality, but the other girls did not accept this. They questioned her as to what she would do in case her husband left her. She then stated that she would go on relief. At one of the sessions Jean had reported that she now had a boy friend and she liked him because he was from the country. She thought city boys were no good. She would rather live in the country with her boy friend because she liked to pick flowers, plant seeds and do odd jobs around the house. One of the other girls pointed out to her that despite what she said Jean was actually planning to do some work while married.

When asked why she preferred boys from the country to those of the city, Jean said that city boys ran away from their wives after they got married and took up residences at other addresses in the city and one could not find them. Neither do they have conflicts about running away

because they know that their wives and children can go on relief. In the country "people live together. When you live together," she continued, "you do not get like. . . ." At this Jean got up from her seat and began to act out. This time she went through the dance of the insane women which she had seen in the film, "The Snake Pit."

At this session the girls were greatly absorbed in the discussion and when the time came for ending the session, they complained that the period passed too fast and wanted to stay longer.

At the next session when the girls talked about boys again and one of the other girls in the group complained of getting headaches when she was out with her boy friend, Jean repeated the snake-pit dance, but suddenly stopped and told the therapist that she had seen something that day which had made her hate the therapist and repeated, "I hate you, Mrs. Grunwald, I hate you." She then proceeded to tell of her needs for sneakers, of a new zipper book and a lock for school and that her mother could not give her these things since they lived on relief. In describing these deprivations further Jean again told the therapist that she hated her. The girls expressed their disturbance at the direct attack upon the therapist and suggested that Jean talk it over with the caseworker who treated her mother. Jean said "no." She wanted these things immediately from the present therapist and repeated her attack on the therapist. As a result of the girls' reaction to her attack upon the therapist, Jean related this to her home where, she said, "there is always a fight going on, a fight between me and my brothers and my little nephews." She proceeded to describe how her sister had beaten the children in a rage of temper and explained that her brother-in-law had abandoned her sister, treated her badly and visited her only once or twice a week. Her sister turns over the money she earns to her husband.

Describing later the very unsuitable sleeping quarters that she occupied, Jean burst out screaming: "I just hate it at home and I fight in school, I fight everywhere." The girls pointed out to her that she is actually fighting people who are in no way to be blamed for the conditions in her home. When this was told her, Jean exclaimed, "Shutup," but she seemed quite relieved when the therapist suggested that they talk about some of her clothing needs after the session.

At the next session again the discussion was around boy friends and Jean stated that she was very careful about the choosing of boy friends because she did not want to have the same experience as her sister has had and tied this up with her father who was very ill, suffering from a heart condition and rheumatic fever. During the course of the conversation Jean said: "My poor father is sick, my mother has diabetes in her

blood, my sister has tuberculosis and one of my brothers has a very bad nervous condition because of the war." When Winnie said that in her home there was always constant fighting going on, but that she herself had given up fighting and pretended not to see or hear what was going on, Jean replied that she was too impatient to be as tolerant as Winnie. She even struck her boy friend the other day. She really didn't want to do it and as though justifying herself she said: "After all, girls, I did not fight in school."

At the session after the one just described a rather interesting and perhaps important conversation occurred. When the girls were drinking pepsi cola from the bottles, Jean said, "It is funny. Now we have a bottle to drink from instead of a cup. I got a cup instead of a bottle as a baby." The girls then attempted to recall how they were fed as babies. They could not remember. Jean complained of the fact that her nephew, who is two years old, still gets a bottle. This statement led on to a detailed discussion of weaning during which Jean stated that she was sure she did not get enough of her mother's breast. Her mother had to bring up too many children anyhow. She ended off by saying: "It's good that I now have a bottle."

In the succeeding session Jean complained about being self-conscious during the school lunch because she felt that the boys who were sitting opposite or next to her at the counter were looking into her mouth. The free association with this is rather significant, for Winnie said she too felt self-conscious the other day when she came out of her house and her boy friend said: "Here comes my wife." Winnie said she went back into her house. Jean added: "You are really looking at your belly. I think we are self-conscious when with boys because we think they will give us a baby." This statement seemed to be too threatening to the girls because they began at once to tell fantastic stories about babies.

When at the next session the therapist would not permit the girls to stay longer than the allotted time for the interview, Jean said to the therapist: "Shame on you, Mrs. Grunwald, you don't want us to have fun." For two sessions after this Jean did not participate in the discussions, but sat quietly. However, at the third session, she had displayed her report card from school where for the first time she was not absent one day and was late only once. Her marks in her studies were also above average. At this session she again attacked the therapist and when the girls expressed shock, Jean stood up, walked up and down the room for a while, sat down next to the therapist and said: "You don't know what I am going through." The therapist said: "I can see that you are upset about something." Jean then complained about her mother's inconsistency and changeability. "I



am afraid that I don't know what to do. I am like my mother. I am so changeable. I cannot help it. My mother's and my birthdays are in March and persons born in March are changeable." When the therapist said she was born in March, Jean wondered why the therapist was not changeable.

For some time after these developments Jean participated eagerly in the discussions. She appeared to be much more mature and her perception of reality and other problems was on a considerably more mature level. At the thirteenth session, when the girls talked about the gang fights in the neighborhood, Jean and Winnie interpreted these fights through the dance. Then they discussed seriously the influence of the poor environment of the boys, the crowding of their homes and the absence of even one single person to whom they feel they really belong. Not having these satisfactions, Jean said the boys feel close to their friends in the street and this leads them into difficulties. When the therapist asked Jean to elaborate on what they meant by this, Jean said, "Don't ask me. I am not a child psychiatrist," but continued to discuss all these problems seriously.

The fourteenth session occurred during the Easter vacation from school and the girls stated that they did not want to talk seriously because talking in the group was just like working. They would rather discuss something frivolous like movies.

At the fifteenth session the girls talked of the need of being loved by someone in the home before they are able to trust themselves with loving a man; Winnie, Jean and Beatrice spoke simultaneously. They all stated that nobody loved them at home. This is why they feel that nobody else could love them outside of the home and they are afraid of being loved, and that "makes you so afraid at night."

At the subsequent session, Jean was very concerned when Winnie did not turn up. At the time she said that she had visited the clinic and had found Winnie, heartbroken and crying copiously because her grandmother was so cruel to her. Jean said that Winnie's grandmother was a religious fanatic and suggested that Winnie be taken out of the home and sent to a "home for girls." When Winnie came to the session later on and mentioned that her father had visited her, which is a rare occurrence, Jean said: "Remember I told you that my father had changed so much when he became so sick. He even gave up drinking. . . . He was a terrible drunk and even made me drunk." She then put her head on the table and described how when she was a little baby, the father would hide his whiskey bottle in her carriage and sometimes instead of getting her bottle of milk, she would get a bottle of whiskey and become drunk. "A short time ago," she continued, "when he stopped drinking, my father

suddenly realized he had a family but now he doesn't know what to do with his family." Jean was very upset because her father told her that her feet were too large and she looked like a stringbean. She hates stringbeans. She hates carrots. She hates cream cheese and "that is all we had for lunch in school today." The latter she added laughingly.

The girls here pointed out to Jean how much she had improved. She no longer gets mad as frequently as she used to and now that she understands what she is mad about, it has helped her a great deal. The other members of the group stated at this point that they were proud of her.

At the following session, the seventeenth, the girls again discussed boy friends and Jean announced that her boy friend looked very neat and now she too was taking better care of herself. She used to be called "shrubby." She used to pretend taking a bath to fool her mother but actually never washed herself. She recalls how her mother on one Sunday braided her hair with white ribbons and put white shoes and a white dress on her. In a few minutes she was back with her dress practically black with dirt and her ribbon lost. Her mother said that "she would cut up her behind." Jean now felt that she was taking good care of herself. She particularly needed to keep herself clean and washed because she was the darkest in her family and then described the quality of hair each of the members had. Some of them had hair like the mother's and some like father's.

During the discussion of neatness that followed, Jean said: "Perhaps I am neat now because I finally got a room of my own." She now slept in a real bed which was depressed in the middle and the other day when she came home from school who was lying on her bed except her mother! Jean became angry and called to her father: "Take that old lady off my bed." She then said that she did not like to talk that way to her father because he can "see." This "seeing" was referred to as having second sight and being capable of performing voodoo. She described how her father was able to see the background of a strange woman who happened to visit their home. She then went on to say that one should never take coca cola because some persons with "power" might put a white stuff into it which kills one. The girls laughed at this and wondered if she remembered how often she had drunk coca cola in the group. Jean replied: "I know this is not true, but often I feel that way." She is especially afraid because her father has "a look." The important thing Jean feels is that one must do things "so that nobody would hate you." The girls discussed her ideas of voodoo and stated that it was impossible for anyone to live that way and if Jean really tried to be so perfect she would be very miserable. Winnie felt that when a person threatened you with just a

look it was not so bad. It is when people withhold their anger. She recalled a boy in her class who even held his head in his hands and stared into space. He never talked. All of a sudden on the Monday of that week, he waved to her twice and she got scared. Winnie got up and imitated the waving of the boy and Jean played the part of the boy. She came closer and closer to Winnie in a threatening posture and the girls repeated this byplay several times. Winnie then talked about her nightmares and Jean mentioned that since she had a room of her own she was often afraid at night because she felt that a man might enter her room through the fire escape but she did not feel like Winnie. It was not that this man would choke her and she did not scream out in her sleep.

In the subsequent session, the girls talked about love and Jean gave a long dissertation on the difference between love and infatuation. She thought that girls in their teens were seldom in love and when asked what she felt love was, she said that when one was older and felt she wanted to make a life together with a boy, then marriage could be good. Then she went off into fantasy that she wanted to marry a husband with a lot of money who could give her a nurse to watch the children. However, she burst out laughing at this and returned to a serious discussion of marriage. The girls were impressed with Jean's remarks and said: "Today it is like we have a round-table conference."

At the twenty-fifth session the girls again discussed their fathers as well as their efforts to find part-time jobs for the summer. At this Jean began to giggle when she described how her father watched her sister's boy friends. One of the girls then said: "Jean, now you look like the old Jean. No, you look like Jean imitating the old Jean." Jean at once stopped her giggling. Later in the discussion she stated: "I shall be different from my parents. I want to have two boys and be a good mother but, girls, first of all we have to finish school, look for a job because it will take some time before we really can get married."

By this time Jean's appearance had changed completely. She really took good care of herself, her teachers commented on her improved appearance and other members of the staff who had seen Jean in the waiting room also remarked what a beautiful and neat girl she was. She now impressed people not only by her good looks, but also by her poise which was in striking contrast to the wild, unkempt little girl she had been two years previously. The school also reported improvement and Jean herself expressed pleasure with the work there. Despite the improvement in all the other girls, as well as Jean, they have all stated that they realize that they still had a long way to go and that adjusting to life would not be easy for them.

After an absence of four months the therapist had recalled Jean to see her on an individual basis and attempted to focus treatment on the reality problems since the family setting was very disturbing and very pressing. It was found that Jean was frequently hungry because there was no food at home. The fighting at home grew worse, partly because of the congestion. Finally, when the family settled in a housing project several months later and the older sister moved out with her two children, Jean felt greatly relieved.

We recognized that the "neurotic residue" in Jean required working through on an individual basis. We were aware throughout of specific fears she had been subject to, which were tied up with her sexual conflicts and feelings of guilt in regard to members of her family. This formed the content of the individual interviews for some months. During this period the girl displayed constant improvement, although occasionally she would go in a state that resembled a mild depression.

She continued her interest in music and took singing lessons regularly. During the same year the therapist was able to attend one of the solo recitals Jean gave in her church. She, as well as everyone else in the congregation, were greatly impressed with Jean's performance, charm and poise. The opinion of persons competent to judge is that Jean has an "outstanding voice with excellent potentialities."

Evidence of Jean's emotional maturity and growth was revealed by her in an individual interview. On Thanksgiving Eve, her sister's husband attempted suicide by gas but was discovered in time to be taken to the hospital and revived. When talking about this to Miss Headley, Mrs. Case was completely unsympathetic toward him and felt that "he had done a lousy job. He should have been a man and jumped off the roof if he wanted to complete the job," she stated and expressed her regret that he was still alive. She described her son-in-law as worthless and irresponsible. Mrs. Case was angry with Jean for visiting her brother-in-law in the hospital and said that had she known this beforehand, she would not have permitted Jean to make the visit.

Jean, on the other hand, in outlining the story to the caseworker, had difficulty in suppressing tears when she described her two little nephews. She described how disturbed they were when they saw their father lying on the floor in the kitchen unconscious. She then proceeded to describe how her brother-in-law was fond of Jason, the younger nephew, while he was antagonistic to Albert, the older one, who is now six years old. Jean felt that Jason was her brother-in-law's child while Albert was not. She had no evidence to that effect but she could feel it in the relationship that existed between him and the two children. She complained about her

sister's whipping Albert and being horrible to him "when he does some small foolish things. He doesn't do many foolish things. He is always so scared and behaves mostly like a girl." Jean stated she tried to be good to him and encouraged him to "act like a boy." "I tell him," Jean stated, "not to be afraid of me and I am patient with him but he is so sad. He really needs help. I know that my sister is avoiding thinking about her troubles and will not come to you for help but my little nephew needs this help or he may go crazy."

The worker recalled how antagonistic and hostile Jean used to be to her little nephews and how brutally she used to beat Albert even when he vomited when he had whooping cough. "Yes," she said, "I know I used to do it but I never knew then I could have such patience as I have now and feel like a mother to him."

*Mr. Slavson:*

The center of these adolescent girls' discussions in the interview group was, as could be expected, their urge to be mothers, which Dr. Spotnitz<sup>1</sup> characterized as the "reproductive constellation." All reveal their desire to have children. Jean criticizes her sister as being inadequate as a mother. Later she is concerned with the fact that she resembles her mother, being changeable like her mother. Still later she speaks of not wanting to be like her parents. These remarks uncover her doubts concerning her adequacy as a parent. When she repeatedly brings the question to the group, she wishes to clarify in her mind the doubt relative to her adequacy as a parent, which Dr. Spotnitz described as the "inadequacy constellation." The conflict between the reproduction constellation and the inadequacy constellation, which all adolescent girls have and particularly those who are socially and personally maladjusted, is clearly revealed here. The security she received from the group seems to have diminished her doubts concerning these and other matters.

There are evidences of growing insight in the patient. Unfortunately so much of the material had to be condensed which made omission of important developments necessary. One of these is an instance when Jean verbalizes the fact that she hates things at home so much that she "has to fight in school and fight everywhere." She became aware of her projections and displacement. At other times she had stated in group discussions: "I am more quiet, I am not as jumpy and I am beginning to like work." At the same time she recognized her restlessness and feared that she may not be able to master her impulses to scream and laugh.

<sup>1</sup> Spotnitz, Hyman, "Observations of Emotional Currents in Interview Group Therapy with Adolescent Girls," *J. Nerv. Ment. Dis.*, December 1947.

Such improvement is made possible through regression which in turn is a result of catharsis. We see manifested the striking contrast between activity and analytic group psychotherapy. In the first, the catharsis and regression were to a predominant degree in action. Now the regression is verbalized as seen by the girls' discussion of bottle feeding; Jean's statement that she did not have enough of her mother's breast, and her memory as a little girl when she refused to bathe and got herself dirty to the annoyance of her mother.

Jean's capacity for identification with other persons is increased, which is another sign of maturity. This is demonstrated clearly when Jean is concerned about Winnie who did not come to the session and when Winnie mentions her father, Jean is now able to talk in a more kindly fashion concerning her own father. She now has found something positive about him, namely, that he gave up drinking and has changed so much for the better. Almost pathetically she states that a short time ago when her father stopped drinking he realized he had a family but now he does not know what to do with it. Her realistic and more tolerant conception of her father is a striking demonstration of her growing objectivity and capacity to detach herself from him, which we term cathexis displacement.<sup>2</sup> By this we mean that the libido that had been attached to the father was freed and is now available for other object relations. This process we clearly saw in the interests the girls displayed in one another and the homoerotic dances and dramatizations. Later these were redirected toward heterosexual interests in boys and to becoming mothers.

Jean's improvement was so striking that the girls as well as others could not help but make note of it, all of which helped Jean's self-evaluation. When Jean reverts to her old patterns, the girls refuse to accept it as part of herself and state that "Jean imitates the old Jean."

The neurotic residue to which reference has already been made is that part of the neurotic conflict in the libido constellation of the individual which frequently cannot be reached through group therapy. In Jean's case it seems to be constellated around her mouth: the confusion between sexuality and orality when she speaks of being self-conscious when eating because boys look into her mouth. We have no evidence that such difficulties can be worked through in group treatment and our practice, therefore, has been to refer such patients to individual treatment.

The complete acceptance and the kindly understanding Jean received from the therapist strengthened her ego which was at a rather low

<sup>2</sup> Slavson, S. R., *Analytic Group Psychotherapy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1949, pp. 75 et seq.

level when she first came to us. In the past she acted out her aggressions because of her disappointment with her parents, especially the father. Her behavior served to punish frustrating adults and to attract attention, that is, attaining love. She now no longer needed these vicarious gratifications. She was more stable and, therefore, able to control her behavior.

While Jean's ego was strengthened (which made it possible for her to inhibit her narcissistic acting out) her superego and her awareness of right and wrong had also been gradually evolving. This is a direct outcome of her relation with the therapist as a good mother and served the ends of maturing her personality.

*Dr. Stevens:*

The record of Jean's behavior in the activity group tells us more about her personality and shows progressive changes in her reactions.

During most of the activity group meetings, before vacation, Jean displayed the same aggressive behavior in the group which was noted in the history. Much of her aggressiveness was expressed on the oral level. She was both verbose and greedy. She wanted "the biggest piece of cake" and "eight quarts of milk," and was unmannerly and aggressive when refreshments were served. As a result of early deprivation of security and affection, she attempted to obtain both through excessive eating. It may be noted that she began to participate positively in the group after having been offered part of an orange by another girl.

Her strong oral fixation with the concomitant high narcissistic need and intolerance of frustration were important in the development of her tendency to acting out. Jean's early deprivations prevented her from satisfactorily making the step from acting to thinking and she yielded immediately to impulses rather than utilizing reasonable judgment. Her aim appeared to be avoidance of displeasure rather than attainment of pleasure.

She also gave evidence of a conflict in the oedipal area. Her two fantasies that her sister was dying and had left the responsibility for the two children on her; and that she had given birth to twin boys at the hospital; her frequent quiet play with the doll house and the smashing of the father doll on the floor, as well as the later concern over men not being true—all indicate a conflict on the oedipal level. The facts that she received so little love from her mother and that her parents did not love each other would make a solution of her normal oedipal desires more difficult.

As a result of her deprived childhood and the unsatisfactory parental figures with which to identify, Jean's ego development was retarded.

It was the weakness of her ego rather than failure of the superego which permitted her to retaliate for the pain she had suffered with behavior of an aggressive, destructive and antisocial type.

The fear of punishment Jean expressed when the girls were discussing the job in a store, and her statement: "No, I don't feature stealing," are an indication of superego strength. The fact that her early relationship to her father had positive aspects was probably an important factor in this development.

Thus, we may describe Jean, at the time of her joining the group, as an intelligent and verbal, adolescent girl who had suffered throughout life from emotional and socioeconomic deprivation while lost in a large maladjusted family. She was self-centered, greedy, impulsive, aggressive and had never learned to form positive relationships. Her weak ego and inability to relate herself to others positively had led her to seek gratifications negatively. She attempted to control interpersonal situations by hurting others, as she had been hurt.

Within the activity group Jean failed in all of her efforts to obtain a hostile reaction from the therapist and received instead a constant attitude of complete acceptance. This acceptance and the permissive, play-oriented atmosphere of the group encouraged Jean to accept gratification of her infantile needs which enabled her to begin a positive relationship. Her relationship to the therapist led her to identify herself with other members of the group, who were in a similar situation, and to utilize the resulting increased ego strength in exchanging her previous isolation for beginning socialization.

As Jean felt more and more secure in her acceptance by the therapist and the group, she no longer had to act aggressively toward the objects primarily responsible for her deprivation—mother figures—but continued to express hostility toward her father and boys, who stimulated her forbidden unconscious desires. Later, with increasing self-esteem and sense of personal identity, we found her defending the Negro boys of Harlem against the teacher. She had widened her sphere and was identifying herself with a much larger group.

The emotional growth Jean obtained in the activity and interview groups enabled her to give up her characteristic, impulsive acting out for the mutual give and take of her later relationship with the other group members. The advance in maturity demonstrated by these changes increased Jean's ability to verbalize her problems directly and to face her oedipal anxiety in a more realistic manner. Thus, from a diagnostic viewpoint, a young adolescent girl, who formerly suffered from a severe



character disorder, has become relatively well adjusted with few neurotic symptoms.

### DISCUSSION

*Dr. Jean A. Thompson:*

This case is an excellent example of the resilience of the human personality. Here was a child who suffered early and prolonged deprivations of the kind that we often think of as producing lasting damage to the personality—yet she was able to accept treatment, to form relationships, to verbalize her actual hungers, and to learn to live in her own very difficult environment.

The value of such a case lies in what it tells us for the next case. Diagnosis and prognosis thus become our most valuable tools. A knowledge of when to undertake treatment, what kind of treatment to undertake, and the goals of treatment in a particular case, with the prognosis in mind, comes only with experience. So this case is a valuable addition to the experience of all of us.

Supposedly the psychiatrist who sets the goals of treatment had the benefit of a detailed report of psychological examination including the results of projective techniques. Obviously Jean had a good intellect and one component of her intelligence stands out—her ability to size up a situation.

There is a thoughtful quality about this girl which made her seek often to solve her problems constructively, which was a great asset in the treatment situation. It appeared earlier when her mother threatened her with placement. Rather than calling it “going to meet trouble,” it appears she went to the agency which she thought of as defending her rights—the court. Her strong letter to the principal saying that the teachers were more interested in their pay checks than in the children was again an effort at solving her problem by going to what she thought was the source of the trouble. Jean’s later discussion of the causes of delinquency and maladjustment reveal an unusual ability to size up a situation. We often see a child who has this ability respond very well in individual therapy.

There is no description of Jean’s attitude in individual therapy, so that it is difficult to know on what basis she rejected the offer of this kind of help. Perhaps her limited experience with acceptable parents made her unable to relate to one parent person. On the other hand, in her home there were plenty of parent surrogates with whom Jean had to fight to maintain her place in the scheme of things, and certainly she must

have had less guilt about her hostility to siblings than she did about her hostility to her parents. Thus she was able to relate to the members of the group, as the group situation aroused less guilt and anxiety.

Being able to act out her feelings in this nonthreatening situation enabled her to face and even verbalize her deprivations.

The interview group then utilized her good sense of reality to guide her toward an acceptance of her situation. The movement from her infantile methods of meeting life to much more mature methods was truly remarkable, and the increased efficiency in the use of her intellect shows that a large part of her conflict was cleared up.

One wonders whether Jean's relationship to the caseworker in the end might have been again a kind of sibling relationship. The question arises as to how Jean will deal with situations where an individual relationship is involved, as in an employment situation and in marriage. She may, however, be sufficiently mature now to accept help concerning the conflicts she has in relation to her father.

*Dr. Peter Neubauer:*

The fact that four persons participated in the presentation of this case is important. It indicates that not only does the content relate to the group activity of the client, but that efforts to achieve this arise from team integration. The caseworker's treatment was co-ordinated with the psychiatric diagnostic statement and the supervision of the group therapist. It therefore provides a group experience to the professional person as well as to the patient.

We witnessed the remarkable progress of a girl seriously disturbed emotionally. My first reaction to the material was surprise that it was possible to achieve such a modification of personality structure within such a comparatively short period of time. Our experience in individual therapy leads us to expect such changes only after long and intensive therapy.

I shall not discuss the material in detail except to say that I feel the aggressive behavior of the girl is not part of an "acting out" mechanism, based on a preoedipal character organization. I believe we are dealing with aggression as a defense against the need for dependency, and the material indicates a content closely related to the oedipal conflict.

I was greatly impressed with the ease with which activity-group therapy changed into interview-group therapy, giving us an excellent example of the changing methods of treatment with the changing needs of patients. However, the paper does not do justice to the thoroughness with which such changes are studied before they are undertaken.

It is easy to demand more material from papers of this kind in order to understand the dynamic factors at work, or to ask for more of the client's history for better understanding of the significance of the change in functioning which becomes apparent, but it is more fruitful to look at the material presented and to learn from it what we can. The striking feature for me is the absence of interpretation of the unconscious meaning of the girl's needs, which we consider an important factor for working through emotional conflicts. We see here a marked improvement, in spite of this, for which Mr. Slavson has given us his explanations.

I should like to add that the concept of the diluted transference reactions should be broadened. In individual therapy we orient ourselves primarily to the emotional conflict. The transference relationship to the therapist might include the totality of the conflict as expressed in the transference neurosis. We therefore introduce treatment methods which will permit us to study the direct expression of the unconscious conflict or the reflection of these conflicts in behavior and attitudes.

In activity-group therapy it seems that the members are much more involved totally, that the conflicted as well as the unconflicted areas are stimulated for full participation. We find, therefore, a greater variety of behavior patterns, which are possible through identification, instead of the "dilution" of individual reaction patterns. Group members describe their patterns of behavior to each other. They express judgment of their social values. They criticize antisocial behavior and, at the same time, support an attempt at socialization. Thus a self-regulatory process toward socialization is instituted. The individual conflict is exposed to the judgment of the many, but also the many give support when feelings of inadequacy or withdrawal seem to interfere with group interest. Naturally, the existence of such group possibilities depends on the careful selection of the group's members and an understanding of the positive contributions, as well as the negative aspects, which Mr. Slavson spoke of in his discussion of the consideration of the girl for group therapy.

It seems that we have here a therapeutic method in which the unconflicted aspects of the personality are invited to exert maximal effort. We need to study those factors which belong to normal ego function, at least to the same degree that we attempt to understand the details of the pathological conflict.

This presentation has been particularly stimulating, as we have again viewed new avenues of psychotherapy which may offer hope to many more people in the not-too-distant future.